
To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 21 January 2021

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Renfrewshire's Promise: Our plan for the implementation of
"The Promise" to Scotland's children

1. Summary

- 1.1 In October 2016, following extensive lobbying by care experienced people and the organisations which advocate for them, Scotland's First Minister announced an independent, root and branch review of Scotland's care system. The independent Care Review began its work in February 2017 and looked at the underpinning legislation, practices, culture and ethos of the Care System. It was agreed that the Care Review would take up to three years to conclude.
 - 1.2 The Independent care review was published on the 5th February 2020 and makes significant recommendations about the future of Scotland's Care system and the changes required to improve this. In addition to listening to care experienced people, the care review listened to the paid and unpaid workforce who deliver Children's Social Care in Scotland. In total the review engaged with over 5500 people. Over half of these were children, young people and adults with experience of the "care system".
 - 1.3 The published findings of the review centred on '*the promise*' narrating a vision for Scotland, built on five foundations of voice, family, care, people and scaffolding. Making the promise that all children in Scotland will grow up 'loved, safe and respected'.
 - 1.4 Since the publication of the review in February work has been undertaken to progress the commitment to the promise and this report will update members on the national work and the local perspective here in Renfrewshire. Elected members considered and approved a motion at Council on 4 September 2020 which was carried unanimously to support the development of a delivery plan for how Renfrewshire will deliver The Promise and that the involvement of the Champions Board should be central to this plan.
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2. Recommendations

2.1 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to:

[a] note the working being undertaken to develop Renfrewshire's response to "The Promise" and our commitment to developing our own Promise Plan.

[b] note that a further report will be brought back to Board which will update members on implications for policy and practice in Renfrewshire.

3. Background

- 3.1 The independent Care Review was established as an independent root and branch review of the care system, covering legislation, practice, culture and ethos. It gathered evidence from a wide range of sources, with the voices of around care experienced people central to the evidence gathering. The findings of the review were published on 5 February 2020.
- 3.2 The key findings are framed around five "foundations" – voice, family, care, people and scaffolding. These refer to the key principles about the child's voice in decision making, the importance of families in caring, the services which form the 'care system, the workforce and the legislative and policy guidance which governs the system.
- 3.3 Following publication, it was recognised that delivery of the key findings and the recommendations contained within review reports " would be undertaken over a ten year period, with an accompanying programme of legislation this will be intended to simplify the current landscape but is also expected to introduce new duties for corporate parents.
- 3.4 In the months following publication, a national team was established to deliver on the Promise Plan and began work in July 2020. <https://thepromise.scot/>.
- 3.5 It is responsible for translating the findings of the Care Review into The Plan for change and driving the change needed to implement The Plan at pace. The Plan will be phased across ten years from 2020-2030, with the initial phase focused on the urgent and immediate changes during years 2-4. These are the things that will have the greatest impact on the lives of children and young people and their families.
- 3.6 The Promise team will facilitate and support change, wherever that change needs to happen to make sure The Plan is honoured and embedded in Scotland. Above all, The Promise team will be accountable to the those with lived experience of Scotland's system of care and will keep listening and reflecting, modelling the approach which all of Scotland's services should embed as 'business as usual'.
- 3.7 The Promise team published a report in October 2020 which outlines how it will take forward it's work <https://thepromise.scot/assets/UPLOADS/DOCUMENTS/2020/10/KeepThePromise-Oct-2020.pdf> . They are currently in the process of establishing an Oversight Board the majority of its members will have lived experience of the

care system. The Promise Team will also begin to engage with stakeholder organisations to progress the key finding of the Independent Care Review.

- 3.8 In Renfrewshire, we have established a Promise working group which includes all key strategic partners, frontline staff and care experienced people. We will work together to develop a plan for how we shape services here in Renfrewshire to deliver on the recommendations of the Independent Care Review and fulfil our promise to the children on Renfrewshire.
- 3.9 In March, shortly after the publication of the Independent Care Review findings we invited Thomas Carlton a member of the ICR and now employed as Implementation and Participation Lead with the Promise team to be one of the keynote speakers at the bi-annual conference of the Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee.
- 3.10 Recent developments in the Council's Children's Service align with the approaches set out by the review. The new children's house which opened in 2019 is designed to prevent admissions to secure care by offering intensive support. The service has explored the possibility of a Family Group Decision Making model and is considering how best to strengthen our approach to nearly intervention and family support.
- 3.11 We have also been working in partnership with the Dartington Service Design Lab since 2019 to develop a quality assurance framework for care experienced young people in Renfrewshire. The work is based on the value of relationships and ensured young people are involved in the research and development of the framework with the overarching aim being to improve communication opportunities and standards of care for young people who are care experienced. The project team have completed their research and are now focussed on developing new tools, processes and methods with young people being involved in creative workshops to help meaningfully input into the quality assurance framework. The quality assurance framework should be produced by March 2021.
- 3.12 Work is being progressed in partnership with the Children's Champions Board to develop a draft Sisters and Brothers policy. This work will be presented to a future meeting of this Policy Board.
- 3.13 The working group responsible for development of a Renfrewshire Promise Plan will report to the Renfrewshire Children's Services Partnership and in-line with the Council motion the plan will be developed in partnership with the Champions Board and a further report with a detailed action plan will be brought to a future meeting of this Board.

Implications of this report

1. Financial

It is likely that there will be financial implications as services undergo a redesign process to address the issues identified in The Promise. It isn't yet clear what the financial implications will be.

2. HR and Organisational Development

As the plan for the delivery of The Promise becomes clearer the implications for staff and organisational development will become clearer.

3. Community/Council Planning

Building strong, safe and resilient communities

- Providing families and children with support to remain together will ensure our communities are supportive places for children to grow up in.

Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all

- Providing families and children with the help they need at the earliest point possible will ensure our communities are inclusive for all.

Working together to improve outcomes

- Providing good quality care is central to ensuring that the most vulnerable children and families in Renfrewshire are provided with an opportunity to achieve their potential.

4. Legal

Unknown at this time, it is likely that legislation will follow.

5. Property/Assets

None.

6. Information Technology

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. Health and Safety

None.

9. Procurement

None.

10. Risk

None.

11. Privacy Impact

None.

12. Cosla Policy Position

None.

13. Climate Risk
None.

List of Background Papers

Children's Services
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